
Mr. NEEDHAM's
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
Reverend Clergy
OF THE
Lower House of **CONVOCATION,**
Novem. the 12th. 1702.

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13^o Novem. 1702.

Ordered,

THat the Thanks of this House be given to
Mr. *Needham*, for his Sermon Preach'd be-
fore them Yesterday, being the Publick Thanksgi-
ving for the Success of her Majesties Arms: And that
he be desired to Print the same.

THO. ROUSE,

Cl^r Dom^r Infer^r Convoc^r

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at *Westminster*, Nov. 12. 1702.

In K. *Henry* the VII's Chapel,

BEFORE THE

Reverend Clergy

OF THE

Lower House of C O N V O C A T I O N.

B E I N G

The Day appointed by Her Majesty for
Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the
Signal Successes vouchsafed to Her Forces
both by Sea and Land.

By W. NEEDHAM, B. D. Rector of *Alresford*, and one
of the Proctors for the Diocese of *Winchester*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Knaplock at the *Angel* in St. Paul's
Church-yard. 1702.

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PSALM CV. 4, 5, 6.

Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore.

Remember his marvellous works, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye sons of Jacob his chosen.

THis Psalm, tho' not so large and complete as now we have it, was first appointed by *David* to be a part of the stated Service of the Tabernacle, on the Day of his publick Rejoycing, when he translated the Ark from the House of *Obed-Edom* into *Sion*.

The re-establishing the Ark, after its long Separation from the Tabernacle (for near fifty Years since its Removal from *Shiloh*, and its Captivity by the *Philistins*) and the rescuing it from an unbecoming Obscurity and Neglect, by restoring it to its primitive Order, Furniture, Situation, and Attendance; was evidently a Work of Reformation; and that too relating chiefly to the external state of the instituted and peculiar Religion of the People of *Israel*. To which the King might be mov'd not only by special Command, or particular Revelation, but also by just reasoning upon the common Principles of a rational and sincere Piety. And in this last respect, it was an Act which, if Men may be allow'd wise for their much cavilling, and holy for being either weakly or affectedly scrupulous, must needs have given great Offence to many of his sober, and industrious, and godly Subjects. A piece of uncommanded Officiousness in the things of God; and no better than a sinful sort of Will-worship, in their opinion; a Reflection upon the Holiness of *Samuel* the Prophet, and upon the Wisdom of *Saul*; *David's* immediate Predecessor on the Throne; a suspected Attempt for extinguishing

the power of Godliness, by a superstitious Concern for the forms of it, and such a reviving of antiquated Solemnities, such an exhausting of Publick Treasure upon the expensive Preparations of a Tent, such a phantastick piece of Bigotry to think to fix that God in a *resting place*, who is present every where, and dwells only in purified Souls; so weak a Credulity, to imagine that the Ark could be any Defence to his Strong-hold of *Sion*, or that it was needful or tolerable to throng his Court and his chief Garrison with such useless People as Priests and Levites, and Singers and Door-keepers, and all the train of the Sanctuary, that it could not but raise Jealousies amongst his discerning and conscientious Subjects, be a Discouragement to the trading and industrious part of 'em, a Jest amongst the Soldiers and the Men of Business, and perhaps an Offence to King *Hiram*, a new, a wealthy, and a powerful Allie, who was by no means to be oblig'd.

But whatever Conjectures we may make concerning the Temper of King *David's* Age from what we cannot but observe in our own, 'tis certain that the Holy Text leads us to take notice but of one Woman hardy enough to publish her Dislike of what had passed into a Law, with all due Solemnity.

For as the King acted upon Principles which would justify him to All who lov'd their Country, and the Religion of it; so he transacted that whole matter with such an exemplary Caution and Exactness, as entirely precluded all other Objections, but what must with equal force lie against the Wisdom, the Piety, and Authority of the whole Nation, and subject them all alike to the Censures of uneasie and assuming People.

For he summon'd, as it were to Parliament, all his *Captains of Thousands*, and of *Hundreds*, and every *Leader*; i. e. all his Military Men: and all his Civil Subjects of the Laity, *their Brethren every where, all that were left in the Land of Israel*, says the Text (*1 Chron. xiii. 1, 2, 3.*) By which I suppose we need not understand every individual Male of his whole Dominions, nor every Inferiour Officer in his Armies; but, all such as were

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wont to be call'd for Advice and Consent upon important occasions. And together with these, his Clergy also, the *Priests* and the *Levites* (*ver. 2.*) All which Orders debating, voring, and unanimously agreeing to bring up the Ark, and to re-instate it in its Original Honour and Attendance, in that new Tabernacle which *David* had prepar'd for it, made it a National Act of Reformation, not yet fully completed indeed in all its parts, but so authoritatively begun, as to oblige the Conscience of every true-hearted *Israelite* to acquiesce and rejoice in it, as the most proper means to unite them All to God, and to their King, and to one another, for the most excellent purposes of continuing God's favour to Them and to their Posterity, so long as their Nation and Polity was to remain upon the Earth; and moreover, to assist their Endeavours, and facilitate their Journey towards that *better Country*, which in that typical and preparative OEconomy they were taught to hope, and to labour, and to suffer for, as the ultimate end of their Faith, and the *Perfection* of the Catholick Church of Christ, whereof they were then living, edifying, and ornamental Members.

'Twas *Michal* alone, whom the Sacred History records to have profess'd a Dislike at what was then done; perhaps to insinuate, that in those better and earlier days there really was no Man so perverse or froward as to do it; or at least, that if there were, it was not fit that they should have the Honour of having their Names transmitted to future Ages. Nor does the impotence of her Disaffection carry her so far, as openly to revile what was the publick Decree and Voice of the King and all his People: but she contents her self with an oblique Reflection upon the Publick, by an exprefs reviling the King for one only circumstance of his Behaviour in that Day of Festival Rejoycing.

She, tainted with the Irreligion of her Father's Reign, perhaps not free from an hereditary Family-Animosity, certainly not an over-constant Wife to *David*, but very stiff the while to the Punctilio's of Courtly State; she alone takes the freedom to censure the Behaviour of her Lord, as too like that of a vain Enthusiast,

Enthusiast, for his religiously Dancing (according to the Custom of that Age and Country) before the Ark, and for being seen, under a Transport of holy Joy and Gratitude which he felt within, cloath'd in the holy Vestments, which were, in her Opinion, so much the Livery of the Priest, as to disgrace the King, and prostitute Royal Dignity to the Contempt of the Multitude. But popular Dislike was all she threatned in the height of her inclination to complain: and she found no Party to back her, or none but what was too wary, or asham'd to be mentioned in so ill-grounded a Discontent, save only a few of her own Sex, prepared by her self, as we may suppose, to receive her Dictates, and spread 'em according to direction. So impossible is it for the most engaging Piety totally to escape Reproaches, tho' it shine in the highest Sphere, and most illustrious Persons.

But the King's resolv'd Piety makes him despise the sorry Infu-
 nation, and to repress the insolence of her Attempt by an
 awful and sarcastical Reproof. *It was before the Lord*, says he,
who chose me, before thy Father, and all his house (1 Sam. 6. 21.)
to be Ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel. He therefore
 suffers not himself to be stopt by any apprehension of combining
 Discontents, nor does he rest satisfied with a transient act of
 Zeal, and the religious Pomp and Exultation of a Day ; but he
 perseveres in it, so as to establish a lasting form of Worship in
 the Tabernacle before the Ark ; restoring the almost obsolete
 Observances, which God himself had originally directed by the
 hand of *Moses*. He goes on to compose new Hymns, speaking
 in them, no doubt, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, and
 to enlarge and perfect this very Psalm, for the perpetual Direc-
 tion and Assistance of the Church (as the Event proves) and
 for a regular and stated Celebration of the Divine Offices in the
 place he had appointed for the Ark of God's Presence among his
 peculiar People.

What Methods he pursued in the progress of this Work, whe-
 ther he acted by sole and sovereign Authority throughout the re-
 maining course of it, or continued to take in, from time to time,

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the concurrent Advice of those who assisted at its beginning, I presume not to determine. 'Tis certain, that in some of the Dispositions of his intended Temple Service, he acted in conjunction with his Captains. Moreover, says the Text (1 Chron. xxv. 1.) *David, and the Captains of the Host separated to the service of the Sons of Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun, who should prophesie with Harps, and with Psalteries, and with Cymbals.* Where, if we may suppose an ordinary Synecdoche of the part for the whole, it renders the Example of this Holy King less applicable to the Case of an absolute Ecclesiastical Supremacy in the single Person of the Sovereign, than it has commonly been taken to be, by those who please themselves in that Argument.

But, I insist not upon this, since 'tis rational to believe, that he who has obtain'd such an honourable Testimony in the inspired Records, as that *whatever he did, pleas'd the People*, would not now transgress the known Lenity and Exactness of his Government, and put such a stretch upon his Prerogative, as to make his Reformation, intended, as is most likely, for the uniting his disagreeing Subjects by the common Ties of one Religious Worship, it self to be an occasion of flaming Discontents, and an avow'd Separation. It is hard to imagine, that the *Man after God's own heart* should give just, or but specious Scandal to the Devoutest of his People; or, that a Prophet, as he was, should have no Foresight of the ill Events which must needs have ensued, had he then challeng'd, or exerted any other Authority, than what was in every respect agreeable to the Constitution of that Kingdom he was rais'd to govern. Least of all can it be supposed, that himself would then invade the Priestly *Function*, or indulge others in their proneness to do so, whilst the Disgrace and Sorrow for what had afflicted him at *Perez-Uzzah*, was as yet fresh in his Remembrance.

We must then look upon my Text as the Dictate of the Holy Ghost, directing the matter for Publick Songs of Praise, and Thanksgiving to God, for his peculiar and distinguishing Mercies towards the House of *Israel*. They are part of a Divine

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Hymn compos'd, and enjoin'd for the perpetual Edification of the Church of God, in its stated Publick Worship, wherein the repeated Instances of the Divine Goodness are to be devoutly acknowledged, thankfully commemorated, and carefully convey'd down to the Observation of succeeding Generations, according to the establish'd and reform'd Usages of a National Religion, tho' neither wholly unblameable in the beginning of its Settlement, nor exactly correspondent to some Intimations of the Divine Purposes, nor made perfect and entire all at once; as I shall have occasion to suggest more particularly before I have done.

But as the Words lie, and with respect to the Circumstances already taken notice of, they lead me to offer to your Consideration these Three General Heads of Discourse, not altogether foreign, as I trust, to the Occasion of this days Festival Exultation.

I. That after glorious Successes abroad, and in the most desirable Affluence and Security at home, it is the Duty both of Prince and People, to have then a particular Regard to the Publick Worship of God establish'd amongst them, and to attend it with a Religious and Devout Disposition of Soul. This the Holy Spirit demands from us by the Pen of *David*, requiring us to exhort and encourage one another in our Publick Assemblies for the Worship of God; to *Seek the Lord and his strength*.

II. That a solemn Commemoration of God's particular Mercies to a Nation he has chosen so to bless by distinguishing Favours, is a proper Subject for such Religious and acceptable Service: *Remember his marvellous works, &c.*

III. That in all such Publick Acts of Worship, we are each of us to consider our selves in our Publick Capacity and National Relation, as being closely united to our Sovereign, to our Superiours, Equals, and Inferiours, who are our Contemporaries, yes, and with our Ancestors and Posterity too, so as to sustain but one single Person in all God's providential Dealings with us. We are not in these holy and solemn Gratulations to contract our Minds, nor confine our Prospect to the present personal Satisfactions

ctions, and Benefits we reap from such Exercises of our Faith, and Gratitude, and Adoration; but we are to enlarge our Thoughts, and extend our View backward, and forward, whilst we celebrate the Praises of God, the Common Lord, Deliverer, Benefactor, and Father of us all. Thus the Holy Psalmist carries the thoughts of the then Worshippers of God, in his new Tabernacle, to a Contemplation of his loving Kindness which had been ever of old, even as far backward as to the Ages of *Abraham* and *Jacob*. Do this, *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye sons of Jacob his chosen ones.*

And if I can at all heighten that inward and active Devotion already kindled in your hearts, and well heated, because wisely directed by the grave, the moving, and the awful Orders for Divine Worship establish'd in our Church; if I can add any new force to the deep impressions made upon your Souls, by such a sanctified knowledge of the Divine Nature as ought always to possess, and distinguish the Hearts of the Sons of *Aaron*; if I can any ways confirm that entire Trust, and Dependance upon the merciful God, for succeeding Blessings upon our gracious Sovereign, this Church and Nation, which the repeated Instances of them do loudly call for from us, upon this Day; if from such endearing Discoveries of his Favour to us, with respect to our temporal Concerns, I shall at all be able to raise your Thoughts above this Earth, and to excite you to labour for an inward spiritual Union with God here, to maintain and strengthen it by such an intense and cordial use of all the instituted parts of Religion, as that it may burn, like the Fire upon the Altar, with incessant Aspirings after an uninterrupted and eternal Fruition of him from whom it comes, in that *Jerusalem* which is above; I shall then think I have at once come up to the Design of the Holy Psalmist, and of our gracious Queen too, in their joint Religious Appointments of such Publick Thanksgivings as now employ our Meditations, and justly demand our best Attention.

I. Then, From the Words I have read, you may please to observe, How much it is the Duty both of Prince and People, after

their most glorious Successes in War abroad, and when they enjoy even an envied Affluence and Security at home, then especially to have a great Regard to the Publick Worship of God established amongst them, and to attend it with a religious and devout Disposition of Soul. *Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his Face evermore.*

To *seek the Lord* at large, every Man following the Devices of his own Heart, is what the wildest Enthusiasm, the vainest Superstition, and the most detestable Idolatry that ever obtain'd in the credulous World, have all confidently pretended to. But I'm not to suspect that any, who now hear me, can imagine such an unlimited, and licentious seeking him, was ever in the Thoughts of the Holy Psalmist.

To *seek him* in devout Retirement, and silent Recesses, may to some People be very beneficial, and to all Men at some times; and to seek him in warm and exalted Devotion, and in resembling Qualifications of our Souls, conforming our Temper, Designs, and Affections to those just Apprehensions we have of the communicable Attributes of the Divine Nature; to strive to arrive at such a partaking of it, by repeated moral Exercises of Justice, Mercy, Long-suffering, Beneficence, and forgiving of Injuries, and the like; is indeed the Duty of all Mankind, of every Man in every Nation, in proportion to the Aids afforded him from above. And we should, I think, be injurious to the pious Men of *Israel* during the whole Government of *Samuel*, and *Saul*, if we did not suppose both them and their Children, to have known thus much, from their earliest Education in the knowledge of God and his Commandments, tho' the Ark and the Original written Law, lay all that time buried as it were in silence, and neglect, and obscurity, in *Kirjath-jearim*.

This then is implicitly to be understood by the words of my Text, but not the direct and full intention of them. God who had honour'd the House of *Israel* in a peculiar and distinguishing manner, by the Rites of his Covenant with them, and particular Institutions as to the manner of their Religious Worship, gave them

them no more Authority to despise the external Parts of it, than he did for their upholding them apart from the intrinsick moral Duties, and feigning an opposition betwixt the one and the other, which in the Divine Designation were inviolably conjoyn'd, and made mutually subservient, in his deep and mysterious Methods of bringing Mankind to its utmost Perfection in eternal Happiness.

What then God had joyn'd, it was never the Intention of the inspir'd Psalmist to put asunder And, whatever the general Phrase of *seeking the Lord* may be suppos'd to import, 'tis certain that the mentioning his *Strength* and his *Face*, have so plain a regard to the Ark, and the particular occasion of this Song do so clearly limit it to the *Tabernacle Worship*, that we must needs understand thus much by it. "Seek the Lord, O you *Israelites*, according to that manner, in that Place, and Order, and with that Solemnity, which we have now agreed to restore, according to their primitive Institution, by an unquestionable Authority, and with a due Reverence for the Law of *Moses*, and all the holy purposes of it.

It is in sense the same with what is elsewhere express'd (*Psal.* cxxxii. 8.) by going into his *Tabernacle* and worshipping at his *Footstool*, saying, *Arise, O Lord, unto thy rest, thou and the Ark of thy strength*, according to the Example of *Moses* himself, whom *David* imitates now, as *Solomon* did both of them, at the Consecration of his Temple. And to this sense one of our own Learned Bishops piously paraphrases upon the Words. *Let this* (viz. their just sense of the Honour done them by being God's Servants) *encourage them to address themselves to him upon all occasions, and prostrating themselves before the Ark of his Presence* (2 Chron. vi. 2.) *commend themselves to his powerful protection. Let them unweariedly seek his favour, and implore his assistance.* Thus then the Positive Laws concerning Religious Worship, at first given by God, but by Neglect, or Mistake, or Infelicity of Times, fall'n into disuse, and reviv'd again by Publick, and competent Authority, were henceforward to be the standing Rules and Measures, Directions and Assurances of every true *Israelite's* Publick Worship

ship of God, and especially upon the most solemn and extraordinary Occasions. And I need not, I am sure, spend time, in this Auditory, to prove that we are safe in the Imitation of so great an Example, and under so wise and so holy a Director as King *David*.

And would to God I were able to carry on the Parallel, and could with the same readiness set before you a fervour and unanimity in the Publick Devotions amongst our *Israelites*, equal to that which made King *David's* Age so memorable, and so far above our Imitation!

But alas! What must we think, or rather, What would one of these ancient *Israelites* indeed have thought! If some wealthy Trader to *Tyre*, or Factor for the Merchants of that City, should have grown so fond of that Country that enrich'd him and secur'd his Effects, as in a sort to disclaim his own, and to vent nothing but Invectives against that which continually protects his Person, and guards his Propriety, to no better purpose, as it should seem, than that it may afterwards forgive his Ingratitude, and bear with his Unquietness? What if such an one should take upon him to approve of no Government but that of King *Hiram*, and perpetually to disparage the Ministry, and the Conduct, the Piety, and the Policy of K. *David*, as deserving nothing but his Censure and Amendments? That his own easie King was a Bigot, push'd on by his crafty Priests to expose his Authority, and waste the Publick Money, upon Religious Trifles, and chiefly in exalting their Tribe to an external Splendour and Magnificence, as much below the true spiritual intent of their Office, as it was above their Merits or Education? That *Jerusalem* was oppress'd with too many Cares about Religion, that the Positive Laws, the Orders, and Ceremonies there, were so many, so offensive, and so rigorously impos'd, and the People so continually alarm'd with a noise concerning them, that the Trade and Manufactures and other Improvements of the Country, were entirely neglected, and sadly decay'd thereby? But in *Tyre* alone, Religion did the least harm, because it was least regarded there; that the
People

People were there all united in a vigorous Advancement of Traffick, under the happy Liberty every Man enjoy'd of worshipping his own God, in his own way; or if he pleas'd, of worshipping none at all? That he could not therefore but despise and abhor the Service of the Tabernacle, and the religious way of flattering King *David*, by an obsequious joining in the Hymns of his Composing and Appointment? Would not, I say, every ancient true *Israelite* have flamed with Indignation against so much Treachery in their fellow Subjects; and so vile an Apostacy from the God of their Fathers to the Service of Mammon, the darling Idol of his *Tyrrians*?

What, if pretending to lament the Death of *Saul*, that valiant Leader of his People, chosen by God, and themselves, to be, what in truth he was, their Deliverer; some unworthy Officer of his, vex'd to find himself now at the end of his Markets and his Hopes, should have bitterly revil'd all *David's* zealous concern for the Ark, as below the great Genius of a General and a King; admiring none but his old Master, who used to send for it into his Camp, if at any time he thought fit to amuse the People by consulting it, but never had so mean a Thought as to trouble himself, or his People, about fixing it in his Royal Palace, and strongest Cittadel? That that Prince's high and active, contriving and enterprizing Spirit, push'd him on to nobler Designs, till at length he died in the Field against the Enemies of his Country, wherein he ought to have liv'd long in Triumph, and perhaps might have done so, had not *David* and his Party perpetually clogg'd his Affairs, by their noisy outcries about the Contempts and Neglects put upon Religion in his Reign? That therefore for his part, he could not but despise the feeble and unmanly Inclination of their new King, as what must end in a devout or hypocritical Laziness of his Subjects, and in the softning their Bravery into a fond and contentious Superstition? What could such Reproaches as these, I demand, be esteem'd by a sincere and pious *Israelite*, but a daring Opposition of Prophaness against the Voice of Heaven, and an open insulting of those Holy

ly Laws, whereby the Libertine is commanded first to repent, and then to *seek the Lord and his Strength*?

What if some refin'd or sullen Devotionist of that Age, should have resolv'd all Religion into Morality, and have taught with popular Address, that there was no other seeking of God's Face necessary for Men, but only the conforming of their Wills to his, the transcribing all imitable Perfections of the Divine Nature into the Disposition of their Souls, and uniting their Hearts to him by elevated and rapturous Contemplations, Prayers, and Extasies, decrying King *David's* Institutions as uncommanded, carnal, ritual, temporary, and destructive, or at least not useful to the Life of God in the Souls of Men; creating an Opposition, where God and Nature, and the Wisdom of the Laws, had fix'd a Subordination, and a concurrence of Causes, for promoting the same common End; and exclaiming therefore against the whole Service of the Tabernacle, as unfit, above all things, to be impos'd upon the Consciences of *David's* well-instructed and enlightned Subjects? I say, what could a discerning *Israelite* judge of all this Sophistry, but that it was in truth a sacrilegious robbing of the Tabernacle, a plundering the Ark it self, and cutting out the Leaves of the Moral Law from the Original Book of it, wherewith the unexampled Robbers having first adorn'd and enrich'd themselves, ventur'd, afterwards, to expose to scorn and ignominy both the Ark, and the Tabernacle, they had impiously spoil'd of their Treasure and their Glory? So very detestable must these Artifices appear to any of the Seed of *Abraham*, who made any Conscience at all of *seeking the Lord and his Strength* according to the holy Intentions, and Command of *David* their King.

But above all, What must King *David* and his great Council have apprehended? How must the whole Tribe of *Levi* have been cover'd with Shame, and overwhelm'd with Sorrow, if any of their Brethren, the Sons of *Aaron*, should have combin'd with these Deserters, should have pleaded their Cause, strengthened their Objections, confess'd them to be unanswerable, and added

to them more plausible and more learned ones of their own? If they should have told them, *e. g.* That upon a strict enquiry, they found, that *David* and his Assistants were unpardonably ignorant of the Scriptures at the beginning of the Reformation, and blindly fell upon a Precedent of the *Philistins* in placing the Ark upon a new Cart at its first removal from *Kirjath-jarim*; whereas the Law requir'd that the Sons of *Levi*, and they only, should bear it upon their Shoulders. That the first Reformers were Irreligious Men, a bold and invading Generation, against whom God shew his remarkable Displeasure, in his exemplary Judgment upon *Uzzah*, whereby he check'd their proceedings for a while, till at length they were carried on a-reith by the overbearing Power of *David* and his Captains. That there was still too much cause for all sober People to abhor the Lord's Offering, since, by a scandalous and partial Connivance the accurs'd Posterity of *Eli* were continued in their places: And that as *David* himself had seen Reason to alter, enlarge, and divide some of those very *Psalms*, which at first he tyrannically impos'd upon the Consciences of his Learned Subjects, who knew their original Defects as well as he did; so there was still both room and necessity for further Emendations, which might therefore justly warrant those, who refus'd in the interim to communicate with such as persisted to offer unto God the Blind and the Lame. That, 'tis true, they themselves liv'd by the Altar, and were adorn'd and dignify'd with the Priestly Vestments, and therefore bound to an Attendance in the Sanctuary, but they doubted not to affirm, that such as turn'd their Backs upon it, and resolv'd never to come there, might in some good Sense or other be said to *seek the Lord and his Strength*; yes, tho' they ran apace, by different ways, into every Region, which was known to bear evil will against *Sion*. That, altho' the Hearts of these Straglers were engag'd in opposite Interests, upon repugnant Principles, yet because they sometimes cast their Eyes kindly upon one another, and always respectfully upon these unexpected Advocates, they were persuaded that an universal Union was still practicable,

and that the only means to effect it, would be, to dismantle *Sion*, to separate the Ark again from the Tabernacle, as it was in good old *Samuel's* days, and to strip the Tent of its Utensils and Beauties, to distribute the Curtains and the Candlesticks, the Heads and the Wings of the Cherubs, the Gold and even the Timber of the Ark, amongst the dividing Factions, as tokens of the publick Condescension, and badges of this new projected Union: And that for the avoiding all Dissensions for the future nothing should remain in *Sion*, but only the Moral Sanctions of the Law, with an unlimited Indulgence to every Man to expound and apply them as he pleas'd. That for this they resolv'd to solicit, calumniate and struggle, without Intermiſſion and without Remorse? But let not this be told in *Gath*.

And blessed be that God who has shewn us a plain and expedite way to a better Peace, whereby, through his Blessing, we may yet hope to remove ev'n these Scandals, and prevent the Disgrace and the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; viz. The mutual encouraging of our selves, and moving all our Brethren every where by Word and by Example, and the inviting even those who hitherto have refused to come, (and surely it would well become them *All* to come on such a Day as this) and join with us in seeking the Lord and his Strength, and his Face, according to the Intention of the Holy *Psalmist*, and the Example of all the Devout, the Honest, and the Peaceable *Israelites* of those better times,

And this leads me to lay before you the Consideration of the Second Head I am to speak to, viz.

II. That it is a proper part of our Religious Thanksgivings, solemnly to commemorate the particular Favours of God towards that Nation which rejoyces in his Blessings.

To remember on a publick Festival, is, not to retain within our Breasts a silent and suppress'd memorial of what has pass'd, but to proclaim and propagate the matter of our Joy, to make its Impressions more deep and lasting, to imprint our Thanksgivings, and enhance the value of God's Blessings upon us, and to animate our

Endeavours

Endeavours to secure the Effects of them to our latest Posterity.

And the *marvellous Works* of God, and his *Wonders* which on such Occasions as this, we are more especially bound to commemorate, are not the Miracles of his Creative, or common Providential Power, but such particular, and eminent Events, as attest a peculiar Care over that People, who are made happy by them, and might, setting aside their sinful Provocations, have, in some sort, depended upon him for them, by vertue of their Covenant-Relation to him. Thus this *Psalms*, and that other which are join'd together in that contracted Form, which was at first deliver'd to the Singers on *David's* Thanksgiving-Day, enumerate those special Favours conferr'd upon the Houle of *Israel*, without mentioning at all the more universal Manifestation of his Power and Dominion over the World, save in one Verse, where God sets himself above the Idols of the Heathen. *For all the Gods of the Heathen are Idols, but the Lord made the Heavens*, 1 Chron. 16. 26. But the rest of that Eucharistick Song is spent upon celebrating God's protecting, and delivering, the Children of *Israel* in their various imminent Dangers; his inflaming at one time the Hatred of their Enemies against them, and the secret turning of their Hearts towards them at another, according to the Exigencies of their State, and the mysterious Designs of his Providence for their Good and his own Glory, working for the most part so agreeably to the Course of Natural Causes, and so gently and insensibly moving the Wills of sinful Men, that the Instruments themselves did not perceive his over-ruling Power, and that after the most evident Demonstrations of his Loving-kindness, it was only the wiser part of Mankind who would so far consider, as to discern and understand it.

It is therefore for the asserting God's Dominion over all Nations, and all Men, and all their Designs and Actions, even of the freest Agents; for the confirming good Men in their Trust and Dependance upon him; and for the curbing the Vanity and

Insolence of the Prosperous, and restraining the Designs and Attempts of the Wicked, by their considering, how often he turns their Counsels into Foolishness, makes their Diviners mad, and their mightiest Preparations a Scorn and an Hissing (which we may understand by *his Judgments* in this place) that we are directed by the Holy Psalmist, and on this Day commanded, after the Example of his Piety, by our Gracious Queen, to remember *the marvellous Works God has done, his Wonders, and the Judgments of his Mouth.*

And that my rehearsal of these his *Marvellous Works* may bear some Analogy to what is its self one of his *Wonders*, that swift and speedy Current in which they have been deriv'd upon Her from above: It is my part only to suggest them, but yours to enlarge in the Considerations they deserve, and to make the Remembrance of them, as we trust God in his Goodness designs their Fruits should be, lasting and diffus'd to many Generations. Permit me then to demand your devoutest Acknowledgment to our Merciful God, for that he has been pleas'd to enable Her Majesty more effectually to unite Her Subjects at home, and to get greater Advantages over her Enemies abroad in Seven Months, than he vouchsafed to the Holy Psalmist himself in so many Years. That he never suffered her, with *Deborah*, to hear the Groans of her own People, under their proud and insulting Enemies; and yet gave her a *Barak* at hand, to rescue her endanger'd Allies from *Jabin's* pressing Yoke, and to chase away their Oppressors by her Authority, and without her Presence, and with an Honour so entire, as to leave no room for a doubtful Interpretation of *Jael's* part in the Success. That she reckons up her Worthies as *David* did his, not by single but collective Numbers. That God himself has been pleas'd, so to blow with his Winds, as first to direct her to the place for Victory, and then to dispatch and compleat it; and does now cause the Waters to flow, full laden with Spoils, to encourage and reward her People; and still goes on to assert and extend her Dominion over the Seas, for the more effectual carrying Succours to her Allies, Terror to her Enemies,

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and the Glory he has given her, all over the World, and together with that, that humble Homage she therefore pays to his Sovereign Authority, and to his Almighty Goodness, for the Mercies he renews to her, and to her Kingdoms every Morning.

And what are all these Demonstrations of the Divine Favour towards her, but the Exaltation of her faithful Subjects, and the Shame and Silence of her Secret Enemies, if there can still be any such? What but the sure Presages and Pledges of a Peace, which in his good time we pray and trust he will give her, equal to that of *Solomon's* in the Affluence, the Renown, and the Piety of it, and Superiour to his, in the only thing that wanted, a Perseverance in the true Religion, such as we have already seen, tried and invincible. *Remember the marvellous Works he hath done, his Wonders, and the Judgments of his Mouth.*

And do ye this in Conjunction, O ye Seed of Abraham his Servant, ye Sons of Jacob his Chosen: Which points to the last general Head of my Discourse, viz.

III. That in these our Religious Office we are to look upon our selves in a National Capacity and Relation, as sustaining but one Person under all God's Providential Dealings with us.

It is no less Advantage to the Religious Life than it is to the Civil, that God, our Creator, has forc'd us by the Weakness of our Nature, and enabled us by the Endowments of our Minds, to seek out for Society, and therein to advance and cultivate our Happiness, beyond what it is possible to do, in the solitude and independent separation of Individuals.

And indeed, to confine my self to my Text, how few of God's marvellous Acts could be had in due Remembrance, were not the spread of Societies wider than that of particular Persons, their Interests more conspicuous, their Report more loud and credible, and their Capacity of carefully preserving the Memory of them by Records, and solemn Anniversary Commemorations, better suited to that End, than all that a single Man could possibly devise or

or put in practice? Thus God has, in some measure, provided for his own Honour, and the due Instruction of succeeding Ages, above what is naturally attainable by particular Persons; upon account of the shortness of their Lives, the doubtfulness of their Intentions or Integrity, the uncertain construction of their Words, or a spiteful advancing of the Authority of any single Contradictor, as an equal ballance against the single Reporter of Marvellous Things? not to mention the Objections which throng in apace against the Veracity of him who relates them, for no other Reason, but because they are indeed as wonderful as they were said to be.

But when God chooseth to himself a numerous Family, or whole Nation, and lifts them up to eminency in the World by a long series of *Wonders* and of *Judgments*; when he links them with other Kingdoms of disagreeing Interests and Inclinations, who would rejoice to lessen their Reputation, if they should impose a falshood, hating the Pretences they make to be the particular Favourites of Heaven: When that God, who has thus advanc'd and settled them, makes it part of their publick Tribute for past Mercies, and the indispensable Condition of receiving an Encrease and Succession of new ones, that they faithfully perpetuate the Remembrance of those Acts, which he wrought not only for their benefit, but for his own Names-sake, to set himself above all the Gods of the Heathen, and his Glory above all the Earth: then it is that the Atheist and the Infidel, the Idolatrous and the prophane, sin on without a possibility of Excuse. Then it is, that the Members of such a select Society, united in the common Design and Exercise of such Religious Festivities, endeared to each other by a just value, for their sacred and their civil Laws, (which ensure to them their present Happiness, entitle them to greater in Heaven, and their dear Posterity to a long continuance of it upon Earth) find themselves engag'd to do good to one another by the most lasting Confederacy, and are insensibly possess'd of, and incessantly diffusing through every Member of their Body, that self-denying Publick Spirit, the proper

proper Character of a true Christian, and so much desired and applauded by all the world: Which yet I fear is but little understood amongst us, since the greatest admirers of what they call a Publick Spirit, are ambitiously indifferent as to unanimity in the Religion of their Countrey, and prone to prefer the Manners and Constitutions of every Nation to those of their own. An unnatural attempt, doubtless, to hope to prevail with men to sacrifice their Lives for the preservation of common Interests, who yet have not first been taught to esteem them upon, the coolest consideration, more valuable than the price they were to lay down for them!

Moreover, this *Relative* view of our selves, when our Minds are heated and inflam'd with a sense of God's goodness towards our whole Nation, endears those publick advantages to us, for the preservation whereof the Wise and the Holy God is pleas'd remarkably to interpose; the very contemplation of his Perfection *derives* then an honourable, and additional esteem upon whatever He is pleas'd to own not unworthy his special and extraordinary Regard; and we find our selves, on a suddain, under new and stronger Obligations to maintain that Order, and Subordination, and those mutual Relations both in the Church and State, whereof Himself proclaims that He is the Favourer and Protector. Thus a due performance of those Relative Duties which give Strength, and Honour, and Growth, and Prosperity to every Nation, becomes charg'd upon the Conscience of a true Believer, and is push'd on by considerations, which relate to an happy or a wretched Eternity. For though Societies themselves be adapted only to this Earthly state, and the Orders of Inferiour and Superiour will be no more on the other side the Grave; yet the guilt of Criminal Omissions, or of open violations of Relative Duties, stands upon account; and the acquisition and improvement of Graces, resulting from a faithfull discharge of them, do prepare holy Sou's for Heaven, and will enter with them beyond the Veil.

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And whereas it is justly thought, that nothing would more effectually conduce to so great a good, than the restoring of Union to the Catholick Church, and healing the present deplor'd Divisions throughout the Christian world; perhaps after all the deep Consultations, and the many inviting, and some dangerous Proposals, for so glorious an end, there's none more proper or likely to succeed, than what my Text suggests, *viz.* That every one should heartily, and sincerely joyn himself, to that National Church, in which he can communicate, and whereunto of right he belongs. Let him endeavour, as much as he can, by ardent Intercessions, by firmness in the common Faith, by charitableness of Affection, holiness of Life, and all the offices of Love, to joyn himself to all the Christians of every Communion, but still without labouring to alter the Terms, or break through the Constitutions of what is peculiarly his own, and whereof he stands bound to be a regular, and an assisting Member. Why should we abode worse concerning the Mystical Body of Christ, than we know concerning our selves in the Natural, wherein tho' one or two, or perhaps more, even of the Principal Members, may be but imperfectly restor'd, after a fracture or dislocation; though the whole suffer thereby, yet does it not therefore all dye; but these very parts still derive heat and nourishment from what is more entire, and are directed too from their common Head, to contribute somewhat to their mutual assistance, and to the service of the whole, though in slower, and weaker, and less comely motions. But if such Parts themselves become shatter'd and dissipated, the Coats and the Juices, the Muscles and the Vessels, the very Bones and Marrow being torn from each other, placed asunder, and at a distance; no skil can then direct a Remedy, nor can all the Balm in *Gilead* heal the Wounds. And could we suppose any one Member to do such a brutal execution upon it self, it would then have enforc'd, what ought not to have been thought of, so long as there was any hope, a decreed Amputation. To behold a particular Church so mangled, and not to lament it, is the utmost inhumanity. To see it with complacency

complacency and rake in its wounds, is it self a Disease unto Death; and to revive and recover it, is the sole work of that Omnipotent Hand that can give a Resurrection. And may the same Almighty *Jesus* who rais'd up *Lazarus* from his Grave, vouchsafe again to assert his own Glory, and relieve the sadnesses of all who love him!

But my Text leads me to conclude with an Union still more Religious if possible, more remov'd from common Apprehension, and more glorious, because more comprehensive, in its end; and this also happily maintain'd by doing as *David* directs those whom he bespeaks under the Title of the *Seed of Abraham*, and the *Sons of Jacob*. It is an union with the Dead, and with those who are as yet unborn; the one sort still alive unto God, and the other so too in the wise and holy designs of his Mercy, which therefore makes *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Abraham*, and *David*, and all the Holy Men and Women whose Names we do, and do not know, such nevertheless as living by the like Faith, in hopes of the same Promises, under the sanctifying influence of the same Spirit, to be all but one Body, under one Head the Lord *Jesus*, according to the known Language, and truest estimates of Religion.

It begins and ends in God, the powers of Hell can never dissolve it; we are all already enter'd into it, and nothing but unrepented Sins can, our Infirmities can not, cast us out of it; for it is successfully carried on by an honest discharge of the ordinary Duties of the Christian Life. But the Acts requisite to maintain this Communion of Saints, together with their Reasons, and their End, are all either so dangerously mistaken, or so designingly corrupted in the Church of *Rome*, as makes it necessary for one who would enter upon that Subject, to guard his Expressions with care, and to descend into many particular considerations very improper at this time.

It is enough for me, if by this transient glance upon the better World, I have been at all able to heighten your Aspirings after it, or encourage you in the way you have taken thither, in which he has already remarkably blest you; if this days com-

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memoration of God's Marvellous Works have so united and animated our Devotions, as that there remain in our hearts a lasting sense of them, answerable to his gracious Designs, and our own Obligations: so that this our assembling together may it self be a direct, and acceptable preparation to that glorious Union with the Saints in Heaven, which God in his mercy to Mankind has discovered, and unto which he daily calls every one of us, *unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; unto the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, Hebr. 12. 22, 23. Perfect indeed, compared with us sinful Dust and Ashes, or with themselves whilst in the Body; but not intirely so *without us*, Heb. 11. 40. as neither can we finally be perfect without them. How is *Jerusalem* built! — Peace be within her Walls! — Shall not she prosper that love her? For our Brethren and Companions sake let us seek to do her good. *Amen!*

Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, &c.



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